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# "CHOSEN"

By

MRS. CONSTANS L. GOODELL

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# "CHOSEN"

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BY

MRS. CONSTANS L. GOODELL

With an Introduction
By
Miss Frances J. Dyer

*"Take my life and let it be*
*Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."*

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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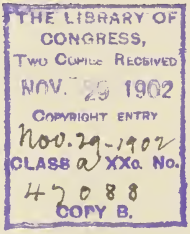


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*"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*

*To the memory of my dear Husband*

*who was the cheer and inspiration of my home for twenty-seven years; and whose faithful and efficient services in the Christian ministry won for him the love and grateful esteem of all who knew him,*

*This little volume is affectionately inscribed*

# Introduction

THERE has recently come into use, once more, the quaint, mediæval phrase, "to practice the presence of God." Its revival is an evidence that the longing of humanity to-day is still embodied in Augustine's cry: "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

But how can we "practice the presence of God"? How can we act upon the advice of Job's friend, to "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace"?

The best and most direct way is through His Word. Next to the Bible come books of devotion written by those who, out of their own deep experiences of pain, loss, temptation, baffled hopes and defeated plans, of calmness, strength, triumph, joy, aye, of rapture, have learned to "practice

the presence of God," and are thus fitted to teach others the beautiful art.

For many years, Mrs. Goodell has been such a teacher by means of her Bible Readings. The limited circles, in various cities, who have enjoyed the privilege of hearing them from her own lips, urged their publication in leaflet form. Many of them have had a wide circulation, passing through several editions, and the steady demand justifies their compilation into a book.

From personal knowledge I can testify to the need of literature of this character among leaders of Bible Classes, King's Daughters' Circles, and similar gatherings. Therefore I take great pleasure in commending this little volume to the Christian public.

Doubtless the significance of the title of the book is far deeper than Mrs. Goodell realized when making the selection. May we not feel that she has indeed been "chosen" for the blessed service of teaching us how "to practice the presence of God"?

May all who peruse these pages become

profoundly and reverently conscious that He is

> "Nearer to us than breathing,
> Closer than hands and feet."

Then as we have this vision of the glory of the Lord may we be "transformed into the same image from glory to glory even as from the Lord, the Spirit."

FRANCES J. DYER.

*Boston, September, 1902.*

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# "Chosen"

THIS little word, as it is often used in the Bible, is a window through which we may catch glimpses of God's eternal and sovereign designs with regard to His children. While He is no respecter of persons in the sense that His infinite love is for all, and His favors and blessings are free and open to all on equal terms, it is just as true that He makes special selections from out the great company He has created, of those who shall in this life have some share in the building up of His kingdom on the earth. To each individual thus "chosen," God draws near and puts him into those special conditions which will enable him best to work out God's purpose.

The word is sometimes applied to Christians in a body, as when Paul said to the saints at Ephesus, "He hath *chosen* us in

Him before the foundation of the world;" and to the Thessalonians, "God hath from the beginning *chosen* you;" and in Christ's own words to His disciples, "I have *chosen* you out of the world." Sometimes it implies a more personal thought, as of Paul—"He is a *chosen* vessel unto me;" and in the words of David, "Of all my sons, the Lord hath *chosen* Solomon."

In these choices we may think of God as deliberately looking about among His children, passing by some and preferring others for *special ends*, thus exercising His divine wisdom and love for the good of all. Solomon was chosen "to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel;" the Ephesians, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love;" the Thessalonians, "chosen to salvation;" Christ's disciples, "that ye should bring forth fruit;" Paul, "to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel."

So far we can easily understand that it is a peculiar honor to be chosen of God, and

a true mark of His confidence and love. But when we hear Him say, "I have chosen thee *in the furnace of affliction*," we start back in terror and surprise. "What! can this be a token of His *love?*" "If God loves me, why does He not grant me exemption from all that is hard and painful, and bestow on me things only that are pleasant and desirable?" Oh, but we must draw a little closer, if we would be let into the sacred mystery of such words as these! They have a meaning very sweet and precious. In one instance it is distinctly recorded, "The Lord did not choose you because . . . but because the Lord *loved* you."

Look for a moment at some of God's chosen people of old—how they suffered! Abraham, when, in obedience to the divine command, he raised the knife to slay his own son—yet Abraham was "the friend of God." What a furnace of affliction Jacob was passing through when he exclaimed, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are

against me!" And yet hear the voice of God saying to Jacob: "Thou art My servant; I have chosen thee. Fear thou not, for I am with thee." See Jeremiah eating the bread of adversity and drinking the waters of affliction in the depths of the dungeon. And yet, years before, he had received his commission directly from the mouth of the Lord: "I have set thee over the nations to root out and to destroy, to build and to plant. Be not afraid, for I am with thee to deliver thee." Of Paul Christ said, "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake."

In each of these cases we find the affliction was the fire that consumed the barrier between God and His chosen ones, so they found themselves in His unveiled presence, ready to take in the larger revelations of His love, and to behold new and delightful visions of His glory.

The divine call to service may be clarion, but the call to suffering comes in tender and compassionate tones, and often brings to the stricken heart the sweetest whispers of

the Father's love; but we must listen if we would understand. We must not entrench ourselves in our sorrow, so as to leave no open door for Him to enter with His healing and comforting balm. This "furnace of affliction" is a suffering which means *blessed fellowship with Christ.* If we will but open our eyes, we shall see, walking in the midst of *our* furnace, one like unto the Son of Man; and it will be a memory of joy ever after, that our loving Saviour was by our side, Himself a partaker of our grief. "O Thou that still dwellest amid the fires of human suffering, and still knowest by sympathy, the sorrows of Thy people, I bless Thee for the mystery of pain that unites me forever to the heart of the Man of Sorrows."

But God will not keep His "chosen" in the furnace forever. "When He hath tried me I shall *come forth* as gold." It was the *breaking* of the alabaster box that diffused its fragrance. So when the heart is crushed with sorrow, it yields its richest chalice of love; and the peace of God flows in like

a river—blessed peace that is born of pain!

Again, in a peculiarly beautiful sense, it may be said of some, they have been "chosen" (in Christ's words) "to be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." Could language be made to express better the Saviour's yearning desire for the personal presence of His beloved—"*With Me!*"

"It was not that our love was cold:
That earthly lights were burning dim;
But that the Shepherd from His fold
Had smiled, and drawn them unto Him.

"Praise God, the Shepherd is so sweet!
Praise God, the country is so fair!
We could not hold them from His feet,
We can but haste to meet them there."

As we are permitted to contemplate their happy estate in that land that is not far away, our hearts beat with sacred emotion, and we would fain

"Count sorrow sweet,
And pain a crown for their dear sakes."

When the Good Shepherd at last leads

His ransomed flock to pastures ever green, and waters ever still, may we, too, be found among His faithful "chosen" ones who shall inherit the kingdom.

# "Thou Shalt be a Blessing"

ONE of the sweetest assurances in the Bible was given to Abraham when God said to him, "*Thou shalt be a blessing.*" No doubt these words fell on his surprised ear like a strain of heavenly music, suggesting to him new and unexplored avenues of joyful service, which he could then but little understand. Happy man! we say, to receive such honor from God. But so broad is the principle embodied in these words, as it runs through the entire Scriptures, we must believe this divine endowment is for any and all who will have it—not great men only, but the humble as well. Abraham, it is true, was a great man, but it was his *being a blessing* that made him great. So it is always; goodness in action is greatness.

Now as St. Paul counsels us to "covet

earnestly the best gifts," it is a worthy aspiration for any one to rise to this blessed attainment. With such a prize set before us, who will be slow to ask, How can it be won?

Certainly not by entrenching ourselves in our own snug and comfortable surroundings, and failing to "look also on the things of others"; neither by setting ourselves up for the praise and admiration of those who stand by and behold our good works; but only as we have the true spirit of Him who is the world's Great Blessing, of Him who, "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"; "Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

It costs something, then, to be a blessing! Yes, it cost our dear Saviour His life of toil on earth, and His death on the cross. It cost Abraham the leaving his country and kindred and home, and his going out, not knowing whither he went. It always costs to do good; it is at some sacrifice to one's self.

But oh, the glorious compensations! Our Saviour says, "Love, . . . bless, . . . do good, . . . and pray for" others, "*that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*" St. Paul says, "Charge them that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, *laying up in store for themselves* a good foundation against the time to come." And our Lord assures us that no one who has made any real sacrifice for His sake, but "shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

A mother asked her little girl to carry a bouquet to a sick friend. She started off playfully saying, "I shall get the best of it." All the perfume and beauty of color were hers while she carried it. Like the child, we always have the best of it when we do another a kindness—the pleasure we give comes back to us like the fragrance of the flowers.

But notice, God *first* said to Abraham, "I will bless thee"; *after that,* "Thou

shalt be a blessing." Would we know the blessing of all blessings which alone can fit us for this high commission? It is *the love of Christ in our souls*, killing out every root of bitterness, transforming the iron of our nature into gold, softening the hardness and converting it into generous love and considerateness for others. When this precious love of Christ constrains us, there is no limit to what God will help us to be to others.

In this day of Christian Endeavor here is ample scope for the best powers of the young people. One need not wait till he is older, nor for larger experience, but just here and just now he may *begin*.

"The least flower with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near."

There is not a day of our existence that does not bring us in contact with other lives that need something we have to give. If that is withheld it leaves some life unblest. Opportunities that are waiting for us embrace the whole wide range of life

and work, and take in all the relationships of home and business and pleasure.

What a wonderful power is this which God is ready to confer upon us when He first blesses us, and then sends us forth to be a blessing!

*A PRAYER*

*Heavenly Father, wilt Thou bestow upon me the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may be the channel of blessing to others. I thank Thee that Thou did'st count me faithful, appointing me to Thy service. May I not disappoint Thee.*

*Dear Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee, and long to show my love in some way that is pleasing to Thee. If it shall be by active efforts, help me in them; if it shall be by waiting, help me to wait in silence at Thy feet; if it be by loss and bereavement, help me to cling to Thee, from whom I can never be separated, and in whom all fullness dwells. Thus wilt Thou bless me and make me a blessing.*

*And all the praise shall be Thine.*

*Amen.*

# Christian Restfulness

*"Upon Thy Word I rest,*
*So strong, so sure;*
*So full of comfort blest,*
*So sweet, so pure."*

IS it possible in this life? And to whom is this grace given?

We find much in the Bible which shows it is a duty, and also a privilege, of the child of God. If a duty, it is plain we ought not to regard it as an impossibility; if it is a privilege, can we afford to miss it?

We see those about us who have happy homes, loving friends, healthy families, enough of this world's goods, and apparently few trials, and we say, These *can* "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him."

We see others whose once happy homes are broken, whose hearts are bowed with sorrow, who have heavy burdens and daily

perplexing trials, and we say, Such as these *cannot* rest in the Lord; they *must* be anxious and worried much of the time. How is it possible when their dearest earthly hopes perish, and many things turn out so contrary to their expectations? When their best endeavors seem to fail, and their prayers remain unanswered?

This sounds reasonable, and has a grain of truth in it, yet it is not all, by any means. We must remember this is *Christian* restfulness we are speaking of, and it is not dependent upon outward circumstances or surroundings. It is true, these may aid or hinder the exercise of it, and often do, but they are not the criterion.

We may rightly believe it is attainable in some degree by every child of God, however he may be situated or surrounded. On the other hand, it is not promised to the people of the world, even if everything moves to their mind and no present trials assail them. None but the followers of Christ can understand or have it. It is the blessed "secret" between them and their

God. "We which have *believed* do enter into rest." Believed what? Believed God's Word, which is given us for our support under trial, for our deliverance in times of temptation, for our comfort in affliction, our cheer in discouragement, our guidance in perplexity, and for assurance of forgiven sin and hope of eternal life; believed that the promises concerning this life and the life to come are really true. So the condition of entering into this restfulness is *faith*—faith in God, the unchanging One, the faithful, covenant-keeping One—faith in Him, though we do not see how He is working.

This rest will be imperfect so long as we are in the world, the same as our love is imperfect and our other Christian virtues, but it is a grace that may be cultivated, and God gives us all the means necessary for it. It is a plant often of slow growth, because we take so little pains in its culture. But it is important that we get it well rooted in our hearts, so that we shall not be overcome by the winds and storms that are sure to come.

It makes a great deal of difference whether we dwell continuously on our personal distresses and hardships, or upon God's encouragements and promises of help. There is probably enough that is adverse in every one's life, if allowed the uppermost place in the thoughts, to shut out the light of the sun and keep one in a perpetual state of darkness. We do sometimes meet those who *will* see only their trials; who refuse to admit there is any bright side; who wonder why it is that they have so much more to bear than others, forgetting that every heart knoweth his own bitterness. You try to lift them up and turn their thoughts into a clearer channel, and they think you do not understand, and are cold and unsympathetic. You remind them that the Lord is pledged to help and support and comfort them according to their need, and they say, "I suppose so, *but*,"—as if there were something exceptional in their case. If this is ever true of Christians, how dishonoring to the Saviour whose name they bear! How He is wounded in the house of His friends!

Paul was able to say, with reference to the ills and calamities of life, "None of these things move me." Surely, his restfulness of spirit did not depend upon his earthly surroundings, for he suffered persecution and trial more than commonly falls to the lot of man. He gives us his secret; it is this: "*By the grace of God* I am what I am." Let St. Paul be our teacher, for it is he who has also said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Listen to one of the real helps he gives us in attaining this Christian restfulness: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report; think on these things." *Think* on them. Think on *them;* not on our troubles. Fill our minds with them; dwell on them; talk about them till we get the sweetness and comfort out of them, and can call them our own. *Think* on them, till we can hear the divine whispers to our soul from the

open heavens: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." "The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." "Let not your heart be troubled." Oh, how much we need the consolation that these words bring! There is so much struggle in life! So many tears shed! So much sorrow mingled with the joy! So many saying in the morning, "Would God it were even!" and at even, "Would God it were morning!" But all the while the pitying Saviour is yearning to comfort His children, and pour the oil of His love and tenderness into their wounded hearts. "Come unto *Me*, and I will give you *rest*."

We need to come to this fountain as often as we can; and, indeed, to live by it as constantly as we can. "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing."

"Resting on the faithfulness of Christ our Lord;
Resting on the fullness of His own sure Word;
Resting on His power, on His love untold;
Resting on His covenant secured of old.

"Resting in the pastures, and beneath the rock;
Resting by the waters where He leads His flock;
Resting, while we listen, at His glorious feet;
Resting in His very arms!—Oh, rest complete!"

We shall find this fountain so rich and inexhaustible, and its support and nourishment so strengthening, we shall grow strong to bear, and come to feel as Paul did, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

In the meantime the tempests may be roaring about us, and the angry billows tossing our ship, but we shall find there is always a refuge for us in the upper calm, where we are sweetly sheltered in God's love and care.

### *A PRAYER.*

*Dear Lord, I rejoice in Thy gracious assurance that Thou wilt supply all my need; so that I may rest in confidence upon Thee, for all the future of my life, and for the solemn hour of my death also,—knowing that Thou wilt disarm me of all fear, if my trust in Thee remains unshaken.*

*Oh, give me that calm and peace which come from the assured confidence that my Saviour abides with me; and help me to honor Thee by my faith. Keep me, I pray Thee, from dishonoring Thee by groundless fears and anxieties; and perfect my trust in Thee. In Christ's name.*

*Amen.*

# Salutations

A GREAT share of the intercourse of people one with another in this busy age, consists in mere salutations. Outside of one's own family, frequently whole days pass, and little is spoken except the commonplace greetings by the majority of people in active life. Each, intent on his own affairs, finds little time for extended conversation with others. Many who would enjoy an interchange of views on weighty and vital subjects feel obliged to forego that pleasure through a press of duties, and to content themselves with a handshake and a word as they meet, while they look forward to the leisure that never comes.

But a deeper and more lasting impression is often made in that brief moment than we are apt to think. We are greeted by a friend in the morning in a way to receive

almost unconsciously an uplift and cheer that colors the whole day, and makes everything we do seem brighter and easier in the doing. We are met by another in a way to receive a chill that we do not get over till the sun has set and another day has dawned. There are those who do not need to sit down by us an hour in order to assure us of their love and interest; we see it at a glance; the first sentence they speak tells it all; the salutation they give is enough; it satisfies and fills us, and we pass along happier than we should have been without it. It is a matter of some importance then, "what manner of salutation" ours shall be. Granting that in spirit it is intended to be friendly, even then it makes a difference what *words* we use.

It is interesting to observe the forms of salutation in the early times. They were various forms of blessing, such as, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you!" "God be gracious unto thee!" The Hebrew word "salute" means "bless."

A beautiful picture is drawn of the meet-

ing of Moses and his father-in-law in the wilderness. As they came near, it is said "they asked each other of their peace." It might have been in the very words in which the king of Judah saluted Jehu, "Is it peace?" A very unique salutation is ascribed to Jehu as he approached Jehonadab: "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thine hand." Boaz saluted Ruth: "Blessed be thou of the Lord!" And the salutation of this man of position and wealth to his reapers, his inferiors, his workmen, was in these words: "The Lord be with you!" to which they respectfully replied: "The Lord bless thee!"

The salute of the Persians was founded upon the idea of personal exaltation. "How is the state of thine honor?" "May thy horn be lifted up." Their monarch was never approached without the salutation: "O king, live forever!" The salute of the ancient Romans, we are told, like their institutions and manners, was based upon the idea of physical strength.

"*Salve*"—"*Vale.*"—Be healthy, Be strong.

When we notice the form of salutation with which our Saviour was accustomed to greet His disciples, we are specially impressed with its beauty and grace: "Peace be unto you!" Occasionally it was repeated twice during the same interview, as if the heart of their loving Lord could not be restrained by any conventional rules of propriety, but must give expression, again and again, to His yearning desire for them: "*Peace be unto you!*"

The ancient Oriental custom of wayside salutations, as at the present day, was tedious and burdensome, because of the time it consumed. It consisted in genuflections and prostrations of the body, accompanied with oft-repeated words and phrases; and this, not once nor twice a day, but as often as people met in ordinary intercourse. Consequently it was not without reason, that when our Lord sent forth His seventy disciples on their first mission He said to them: "Salute no man *by the way*." Their time was too precious to be wasted on un-

necessary and meaningless ceremonies. But it was by no means the thought of Christ to do away with *all* salutation, for He went on to say, "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." Is it not a significant fact that Christ considered it of sufficient importance, not to leave His disciples in doubt as to a good and fitting form of salutation? At one time He taught them how to approach their Heavenly Father in prayer. He now taught them how to approach their brethren in Christian intercourse.

It is in accord with the spirit of our Saviour's example and teaching, that we find among the opening words of every one of Paul's Epistles (excepting that to the Hebrews) this salutation: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." It is repeated no less than thirteen times in thirteen successive letters, almost word for word the same. If Paul was so much in the habit of *writing* this salutation, may we not believe these very words often rose to his lips as

he greeted his friends face to face? If so, how glad they must have been to see him coming! What a benediction awaited them! One whole chapter in the Epistle to the Romans is taken up with salutations. A long procession of the friends of Paul passes before him, each one in turn receiving his personal Christian greeting; Priscilla and Aquila, and Urbane and Philologus and Julia and the beloved Persis, and so on—twenty-seven of them whose names are mentioned, besides the mothers and sisters and households of these, a multitude more whose names are not given. In like manner Peter was wont to say, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you." John and Jude also used expressions very similar.

As we come down to modern times, what a contrast do we find in the manner of salutation in common use even among Christian people! And we naturally question why were these ancient and beautiful forms suffered to fall into disuse. Certainly not because those that were substituted are better. Imagine, if you can, Paul greeting

a friend on the street with "How do you do?" or Peter grasping the hand of a fellow-companion with "*How are you?*" Would you not feel that these Christian disciples had lost much of their old power for communicating blessing? that the rich flavor of the Christ-love in them had gone, and the charm of meeting and greeting, once so sweet, had vanished?

Some may say those Bible expressions are not suitable for our day—they are too religious. But there was a secular side to life then, as now. Christ was a carpenter's son, and Paul was a tent-maker, and Martha kept house, and Peter was a fisherman; and yet our Lord said, "Into whatsoever house ye enter, *first say*, Peace," etc. Why not now? For years we have thrust upon our friends the commonplace and worn-out "How do you do?" till it means little or nothing. At best it has come to refer almost exclusively to one's physical condition. If we are on our way to the Heavenly Canaan, why not begin to use the language of that country, and to

express, to our *Christian* friends at least, our aspirations for their spiritual welfare, as we meet? *Peace be unto you!* Think what a genial and refining influence would accompany such words as these, spoken in the spirit of Christ, even now! They would seem to create a kind of heavenly atmosphere in which nothing unkind or impure could find a place. What a check they would be upon much of the ordinary conversation we hear regarding the mistakes and follies of those about us. How they would tend to disarm us of the spirit of criticism and fault-finding, and melt us into sympathy and oneness! Is it not plain they would bespeak a higher and holier bestowment than the "Hail" of the ancient Greek, or the heartless "How are you?" of the modern American?

We do not forget that our "*Good-morning,*" so common, often conveys, and may always be made to convey, a heart-felt blessing. It may express our sincere wish that good and only good may come to one another. Can we not make it more hearty

and real, and speak it in a way to have it *mean* something?—a true Christian salutation which shall lift the hearts of those we address up into the love of our Heavenly Father, from whom cometh every good.

Our greetings *should be benedictions*, and leave the grateful impression of such. They should be made to express kindness and good-will. The memory of them would fill the heart with gladness all the day. Surely there is no one who is not privileged to greet the acquaintance or friend with a cheerful smile and a bow of kind recognition which will be a salutation of fellowship, though no word is spoken. "The golden sun salutes the morn," and light bursts upon the whole universe. So our very look of brightness, though silent, may be "a song without words," a greeting which shall be felt. Those we meet are oppressed with cares and anxieties, with fears or self-distrust. They, conscious of faults, perhaps, or mortified by failures—smarting, it may be, over remembered slights and wrongs, are in a state of mind to be

greatly affected by our lightest word, our every look. Our words may bring peace or additional anguish to a heart already over-laden; our look, relief or new heaviness of soul.

In view of these things, may we not regard our salutations as one of the special means God has put into our hands with which to communicate blessing? Is it too much to say it is a talent given us to cultivate, for the use or abuse of which we shall be called to account?

# Wayside Ministries

*(A BIBLE READING)*

LUKE 19: 1–10.—These few verses contain an incident in the life of our Lord with which we are all familiar, but before we come to the incident itself we find a most instructive lesson. We read, "*Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.*" He was *passing through.* It was not His purpose to stop there; He was aiming at another destination. But he was detained, and the result we have in the account that follows.

Many of our Lord's important works may be termed wayside ministries. As He was going from one place to another, He often lingered wherever He saw an opportunity to bless or cheer a human being. Sometimes He ministered to the body, sometimes to the soul. In this He gave a beautiful example to us. Every day, everywhere, if

we have the spirit of Him who went about doing good, opportunities will open, when God will use us in ways we little dreamed of. It may be only a word, a touch, and some heart will be uplifted and blessed, just because we chanced to be passing that way.

There is more in this than we think. Paul said, "*For me to live is Christ.*" Wherever he went, men could see Christ in his conduct and bearing.

It is related of St. Francis that, one day, as he stepped down into the cloisters of his monastery, he said to a young monk: "Brother, let us go into town to-day and preach." So they went forth, conversing together as they went. They wound their way along the principal streets, through the lowly alleys, to the outskirts of the town, and to the village beyond. Returning to the monastery gate, the young monk said: "Father, when shall we begin to preach?" Francis, looking down kindly upon the young man, replied: "My child, we have been preaching while we were walking.

We have been seen, looked at, our behavior has been remarked, and so we have delivered a morning sermon."

Turning now to the narrative recorded in the remaining verses, we find the story of a simple conversion. We learn much in the Gospels from Christ's dealings with the multitudes; but when we carefully note His dealings with an individual, we seem to draw nearer to Him ourselves, and can more easily understand the personal touch of our Lord.

The scene here described is an ordinary one, in many respects, yet in others a rare and conspicuous one. As Jesus was passing along, a crowd of curious spectators had gathered, made up probably of scribes and Pharisees and lawyers, a class who on other occasions had criticised Him because He mingled with the common people. Our attention is suddenly directed to one person. "*Behold a man.*" Let us look carefully, and see what we can learn about him.

His name is Zaccheus. He is spoken of as "*chief among the publicans.*" Jericho

was a Levitical city and the residence of a great many priests. Its position in the import and export trade between the two sides of the Jordan made it also a city of publicans. The collection of taxes required a strong force of workmen to be stationed there. Zaccheus probably stood at the head of such a force. He was a rich man. Rich people were not, as a rule, those that followed Christ. Here was an exception. Christ had lately shown how hard it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It does not appear that Zaccheus had previously any serious concern for religious truth; but, having heard of this wonderful man, and the marvels He had accomplished, he was now moved with curiosity to see Him. So he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, for he was little of stature and could not see over the shoulders of others. Very likely others in this crowd had this same curiosity, but Zaccheus was more in earnest than the rest, and his zeal met with a quick reward.

Jesus did not ordinarily study to show Himself—was not carried aloft in a procession as some dignitaries have been. He did not ride in an open chariot as princes do ; but, like any common man, He walked among men. It was the day of His humiliation.

At the same time, He was always found of them that sought Him.

Zaccheus was not more alert to see Christ, than Christ was to see Zaccheus; for he had no sooner gained his place of view, than Christ's eye searched him out.

We read that, "*When Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him.*"

What, do you suppose, were Christ's thoughts just then ? Perhaps He was thinking, *There* is a soul that is seeking Me!—he has this world's goods in abundance, and position among men; but these things do not satisfy him; he is restless, and craves something higher and more enduring;—his *spiritual* nature is hungry;—he hardly knows what he wants, but *I* know, and I have that to give him that the world knows

not of. I believe I will stay awhile here in Jericho on his account. I will go to his house and meet him alone. Apart from the crowd, he will open his heart to Me, and be ready to receive from Me the spiritual manna, of which, if a man eat, he shall never hunger.

And so Christ said to him, "*Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.*"

Imagine his surprise at hearing Jesus call him by name! He might have answered, as Nathaniel did, "Whence knowest Thou *me?*" Oh, but the Lord knoweth them that are His!

"*Zaccheus made haste and came down and received Him joyfully.*" Here was the beginning of his conversion. St. John writes: "*As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.*"

Oh, to have heard all that passed between them as they talked together that day! We read that, "*Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord,*" etc. He did not carelessly recline upon his couch, as he might have

done in the presence of an equal, but his attitude was humble and reverent. A single verse contains all that he said,—but what a volume is there! "*Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor,*"—not *will* I give in my will, when I die, but I give *now*. Possibly he had heard about the directions Christ gave another rich young man, to sell that he had and give to the poor, and how he went away sorrowful. So he was saying to himself, Such shall not be my case. If I have been selfishly hoarding my riches, unmindful of those less favored about me, I will give all the more freely now. I will give half of all I possess!

This was a very large proportion for benevolence. Can we easily find a parallel to-day? Many probably feel if they give a tenth to the Lord, that they have met the requirements of duty; but Zaccheus went still further. He said, "*If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*"—He did not say, If I am sued at law and compelled to do it, but I will do it voluntarily.

What was Jesus' reply to these words of Zaccheus? "*This day is salvation come to this house.*" He did not ask him if he was penitent for his sins;—if he was submissive to His will;—if he loved Him, even. Looking into his heart, however, he could see all this and more. The Christian graces show themselves differently in different people. With some, love is more prominent; with others, faith or penitence. With Zaccheus, it was the *grace of benevolence.* It has been said that a man's purse is the last thing to be converted. With Zaccheus, it was the first.

Christ finds many avenues to the heart, and it is well to keep them all open. But we cannot lay too much stress upon this grace of benevolence. It is interesting to notice how Paul magnified it when he held up the Macedonian churches as examples to the Christians at Corinth. "*We make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded*

*unto the riches of their liberality"* (2 Cor. 8: 1–4). Then, by way of incentive, he says to them: "*Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge, . . . see that ye abound in this grace also.*" "See," or see to it. As if he had said: "This will never come about of itself; it will require careful planning. See to it; do not let the matter drift."

But this is not all. He adds (9: 8), "*God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*" He implies that this grace of benevolence does not depend upon our efforts alone. God must give it to us, and make it abound. It is a gift of God, as truly as faith, or love.

Was it an act of self-denial on the part of Zaccheus to give up half his goods? Of course it was. To be sure, he was rich, and might have had enough left to make him comfortable; nevertheless, like other rich men, no doubt he loved his money, and hated to part with it. But he had

caught the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, "*though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.*"

He was learning to exercise this Christ-like grace of benevolence.

"True giving is not the throwing away of that which we do not want and shall never miss. But it is the consecrating to noble uses that which is very dear to us, that which has cost us much."

What we wait for, dear friends, and are looking hopefully to see, is the consecration of the vast money-power of the world to the work, and cause, and kingdom of Jesus Christ. God grant we may each have a part in bringing this about, both by word and by example!

*A PRAYER.*

*Help us, dear Lord, to lay the great and important interests of Thy Kingdom on our hearts, and constrain us to put forth all our energies to advance them. Forbid that any of us should fritter away our God-*

*given opportunities of usefulness, and find no time left for Thee and Thy work.*

*Help us to choose the highest and best things, and ever be ready to sacrifice the lesser things, for Thy sake. Give us the same desires that are in Thine own heart, and the same yearnings over those that are in darkness and sin. Make us strong for Thy service, and patient in the toils and responsibilities of life.*

*Amen.*

# The "North Wind" and the "South Wind"

SOLOMON, we learn, was the author of one thousand and five songs; but, so far as we know, only one of them has been preserved. We could wish we had them all. What a volume they would make! And how gladly we would give it a place in our libraries!

We do not know what variety of themes he treated in his many songs, nor what the character of the music was; but, if we think a moment, we are not surprised that this one song which we have, has been given the honored place among them all, and is called "The Song of Songs." And why? We may imagine some of these songs were songs of mirth, some of gaiety or pleasure, some of pathos and subdued grief, some commemorative of public and important events; but this one treats of

what has been rightly termed, "The greatest thing in the world—Love," and embraces in its scope, both divine and human love.

The author uses the figure of "bridegroom" and "bride," which suggests to us the most endearing of all human relations, to represent the mutual love of Christ and His church. So, although written long ages ago, this song has its inspiration for us now, who are trusting and following Him as our Saviour.

The love Christ ever bears His redeemed ones is perfect in kind and in degree, and lacks nothing; yet it is evident that it is not satisfied until it meets a real and hearty response. His infinite being yearns for an interchange of His divine love with our human love; and it is apparent that when this longed-for response is given, His heart is filled with a joy which nothing can abate. "The Lord taketh pleasure in His people." "The Lord will rejoice over thee with joy; He will joy over thee with singing."

In this song, the church of Christ is symbolized by a garden, wherein are all manner of choice flowers and fruits and spices, good to the taste, and fragrant in perfume. "A garden enclosed is my bride." This may perhaps suggest also, the tender guarding from every harm or intrusion and the wise and loving care which Christ bestows upon His saints. "He knoweth them all by name." "Not one of them is forgotten." "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil." Such is the expressed devotion of this great heart of love!

Into this garden the bride invites her bridegroom. "Let my beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits." And the response is heard, "I am come into my garden, my bride—to see whether the vines flourish and the pomegranates bud."

If we study this song carefully just here, we shall see we have passed by a very important feature, and one of vital significance

as we consider its application to our own lives; and that is, the apparent consciousness, on part of the bride, of a preparation necessary before receiving her bridegroom. This is brought out in her exclamation, "Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." These words are very pregnant, and reveal an essential truth which bears equally upon the life of a garden and the life of a child of God. The spices which give forth their fragrance in the natural garden, typify the graces of the Holy Spirit in the soul, without which, the soul remains barren and fruitless. In the natural world the south wind, with its softness and grace, is not the only breeze necessary to favor growth and vitality. The north wind, with its healthful strength and ruggedness, must have its play, in turn, to invigorate and vitalize the otherwise enfeebled life. So with the child of God.

We almost instinctively crave indulgence in the things that are pleasant and desira-

ble; but our Heavenly Father sometimes sees that severer measures are needful; that disciplines and vicissitudes must have their place, in order to start the spiritual fruits into life. Then, for a time, the mild, indulgent south wind is stayed, and the north wind of grief, and affliction, and loss, and loneliness, is made to blow, that the spices of love, joy and peace, of submission and trust, may flow out.

"Sometimes tears are best. God sends them as mercifully as dew or rain. . . . But with those who truly trust Him, the sorrows that are bitterest are transformed into joys that are sweetest. Where there is faith in God, there are no wasted griefs or sorrows; they will all appear in the great hereafter, as odors in the golden vials under Jehovah's throne."

Disciplines rightly borne bring the submissive, trusting soul into an attitude which is honoring to God, and which insures His loving approval. To all such of His children, He reveals Himself in rich measure, as their all-tender Father, and Comforter,

and Friend, yearning over them in love, raising up those that are bowed down, and giving the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

If we are conscious that we have not yet attained the high point in our heavenward career, where we can, from the heart, pray, "Awake, O north wind, and blow upon my garden," can we not, by His grace, say, "Send what is best, O Lord," "Thy will be done."

A Christian poet has beautifully expressed the sweet repose of the child of God, who has a comforting vision of the brighter world beyond, where all tears are wiped away, and the eternal glories appear just in sight.

"When earthly voices, once so dear,
Have died in silence, one by one,
Till I am left to mourn them here,
With empty heart, and all alone;
Yet have I peace, and can rejoice,
If I but hear the Master's voice,
'A little while—wait patiently,
A little while, and thou shalt be
With thy beloved, and with Me.'"

# A Time to be Sick

*" Closer, my child, to Me,*
*Closer to Me!*
*It is a Father's hand*
*That chastens thee."*

I HAVE sometimes wondered why, in the wise man's enumeration of the events of human life—"a time to be born, a time to die"—etc., he did not include in the "times and seasons for every purpose under the heaven," this also—*a time to be sick;* for it rarely if ever happens that a person lives to years of maturity without experiencing some season of sickness. To be sure, it is not always so much God who sends illness as we who bring it on ourselves; indeed, much of the sickness in the world is the result of imprudence and disregard of laws of health. Many have yet to learn that it is more sinful to waste health than to waste money. Paul said to

the Christians in Corinth, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost?" We remember how the sin of desecrating God's temple was regarded by His people of old. Is this temple of the Holy Ghost any less "holy" to-day? How scrupulously, then, we should guard and preserve it pure and undefiled, that it may be a fit dwelling for the Spirit of God.

But the imprudent are not the only ones who suffer the infirmities of the flesh; the conscientious and painstaking in matters of health also are overtaken by sickness; it comes upon them as suddenly and unlooked for as an enemy in the dark. The poet sings,

> Life hath many a pleasant hour,
> Many a bright and cloudless day;

but he is not thinking of sickness, for upon whomsoever it comes, and in whatever form, it is a sharp-edged sword; to all alike it is the one unwelcome thing, and looked upon as a calamity. Of all earthly trials, it, perhaps, more than any other, searches into the innermost recesses of our

being. Satan showed pretty well his knowledge of human nature, when he said of Job, "Put forth Thine hand now and touch *his bone* and *his flesh*, and he will curse Thee to Thy face."

None of us are ever ready for sickness. If we find ourselves, after a night of restlessness and tossing, shorn of our strength and unable to rise, we say: "I cannot stop to be sick! There is much unfinished work waiting for me, and plans which no one else can carry out. If I must be sick, let me have a day or two to clear up matters, and set my house in order!" But no—it is upon you, and it is useless to resist it. There is a *time to be sick*, and that time is *now*. Did you ever think it is the hand of God laid upon you?

All through the Scriptures "the hand of the Lord" is used to signify some special dealings of God with His servants, an important commission to give, as in the case of Ezekiel, a revelation to make, as to Elijah, and elsewhere to impart strength or courage, or to reprove of sin. So now it would

seem that God lays His hand upon His children in order to speak things they would not hear except in the silence of the sick room. The voices of the world are loud and clamorous, and often drown the "still small voice." He now and then compels us against our will to listen. "*He maketh me to lie down.*" He draws us nearer to Himself that we may hear the whispers of His love, or the tenderer tones of rebuke and admonition.

It is good at such a time to say with Samuel, "*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*" And, with David, "*I will hear what God the Lord will speak.*" It is well to ask to understand the lesson He is trying to teach us. Christ said to His disciples, "*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.*" The lessons learned in the school of suffering are blessed lessons, and sometimes yield the choicest fruits in after life. When we have been ill our voice is softer, our step gentler, our hearts more tender and sympathizing, our prayers more sincere, and our outlook to the future more

earnest. The petty annoyances of every-day life which we have allowed to fret and worry us sink into insignificance, and we resolve to live henceforth with higher aims and nobler purposes in view.

Many of God's dear children have passed through the valley of pain and suffering to the high table-lands of sweet peace and nearness to God, and even to the precious mount of exaltation where the melodies of heaven are almost heard—and afterwards been able to testify, "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*" The refining fires have done their work, purging away the dross of selfishness and worldliness which so sadly hides the light of Christ, and bringing out the bright image of Him who sits as a refiner and purifier of His people. We should pray that such may be our case when God lays His hand upon us, and calls us apart to be with Him alone.

Jesus on one occasion said, "*This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God.*" Here we learn one unmistakable design of sickness; it is that we may glorify

God in it. This we can do by manifesting His spirit and temper; by bearing our pain in patience and even thankfulness.

It is a false notion we entertain, that when sick and laid aside from active duties we can do no good. It is the time of all others to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit—"*love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.*" Some of the most effective sermons ever preached have been the silent ones from the sick-room, and that is often the one spot in the whole house where the presence of Christ is most blessedly felt—where the light shines the brightest—the place that is filled with the "*odor of the ointment*" of consecration and praise. Most lovingly the dear Lord comes to His waiting and suffering child to relieve the monotony and weariness, and to fill the hours of day with sweet thoughts of Him, who also giveth "*songs in the night.*"

Sometimes the mind is too weak to think or pray. He exacts nothing from us then. As a mother folds her tired child to her

bosom, He gently puts underneath us His everlasting arms and bids us rest in Him.

But sickness does not always change into health. This suggests reason for thoughtfulness when God lays His hand upon us in sickness, for we do not know where it will end. It may lead to the eternal gate of light, and into that country where the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick." If our life is hid with Christ in God, He will surely say to us then, "*Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.*" Thus He will give abiding confidence and hope, taking away all anxiety, and impart a quietness and repose that cannot be disturbed or broken. "*For so He giveth His beloved sleep.*"

### "Alone, Yet Not Alone."

Communion with God is a great comfort in times of loneliness. We may be separated from our dearest earthly friends, but we can never be separated from our *best* Friend; His sweet assurance comes, "Lo, I am with you *alway*." But communion means something more than presence. It

implies a confiding interchange of thought and feeling between our Lord and ourselves, a heart to heart conference together, in which we each have a part. We listen to "hear what God the Lord will speak," and, in turn, He waits for our words. If there is no response from us there can be no communion. God said to Moses, "I will come down and talk with thee." And the record stands, "The Lord spake with Moses face to face as a man speaketh with his friend." What could be more personal than this? Just as truly, we may speak with the Lord as we would with the most intimate friend, and He will hear the very words we utter. We may breathe into His ear our deepest longings and desires, our love and praises, our complaints even, and He will answer us in the joy of our heart.

*A PRAYER.*

*O Lord, I have come into my closet and shut the door, that I may be alone with Thee for a little. O will Thou meet me and give me a sweet sense of Thy presence, and let me*

*know Thou art near to hear the petitions I bring Thee. I thank Thee for Thy love, so rich and abounding, which yearns over me unceasingly. I thank Thee for Thy tender sympathy, which reaches down to all the varying circumstances of my daily life, bringing needed help and peace. I thank Thee that Thou dost understand the desires and longings of my heart before I have ventured to express them in words, and that sometimes Thou dost answer before I call. Bless us in our home, and in the conduct of our family duties. Bless the dear children Thou hast given us, and lead them in unerring ways of obedience and love, and hold them in right paths. May they love Thee and count Thee as their best Friend, and strive to please Thee in all they do, day by day. So may our entire household rejoice in Thee, and find it our supreme joy to follow Thee in ways of praise and service, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

# Visiting The Sick

OUR Saviour includes this among the special ways of serving Him: "*Sick, and ye visited Me.*"

Many Christians do a vast amount of good to Christ's sick and hidden ones by sending them kindly remembrances and portions from their own bounty; but we learn there is a more personal service which is pleasing to our Lord. "Pure religion . . . is . . . to *visit.*"

Sickness is often a time of depression and of loneliness. Instead of mingling with people as in times of health, one is shut in, apart and alone;—he misses the companionship of others;—time goes slowly;—he hears the clock tick. But a look into the face of a friend, a grasp of the hand, the music of a kindly voice,—these are worth more than a hundred messages *sent,* they are

the very heart-beats of love. To them, the coming of a warm, sympathetic soul, in Christ's name, to minister comfort and consolation, is like an angel's visit,—and if repeated, it proves to be the one bright spot in the whole day, to which the invalid looks forward with happy anticipation and desire.

Visiting the sick thus comes to be for us a very sacred mission, and well worth our study to know how wisely to do it.

I. While we endeavor to cheer with bright words, we should be careful not to startle the sick, as we enter their rooms, with exclamations of surprise or alarm. A person once accosted his invalid friend, thus: "*Why! you poor, picked chicken!*" No doubt there was something in the wasted look of the sick one, that suggested such a comparison, but while playfully said and received, it was evident the words fell heavily upon the ears of the invalid, and dampened his faint hope of convalescence.

II. It is important that we do not stay too long. Repeated calls of a few minutes

are better than a single one of an hour. A long visit is wearisome, while a brief one leaves the patient longing to have you come again.

III. Carry something beautiful to look upon,—a flower, how it brightens! a little fruit, or some appetizing delicacy from your own kitchen, or whatever may conduce to the comfort, especially of those who seldom have these things. The "cup of cold water" is counted worthy of mention.

But above all, do not fail to carry a smile, a cheerful word; and think to leave with them a promise from God's Book;—these are better than grapes or jelly. "A merry (joyous) heart is a good medicine." "Blessed are they that *hear* the Word of God."

IV. If the patient is weak, do not expect him to entertain you. The exertion of a sick person to make a visitor's call agreeable and pleasant, may so tax his little strength as to set him back in the scale of improvement a whole day. Such visits prove positively injurious. Be quick to dis-

cern whether he desires to talk himself, or to listen to you. If the first, be patient and let him unburden his troubles, and give him your sympathy in spirit, if not in words. Sometimes it is a better way just to keep still and give your ear to hear. On the other hand, do not encourage him to talk at length about his pains and aches. Do not try to draw him out on all these points; this is the mission of the physician. The constant dwelling upon one's symptoms is demoralizing and depressing in its effects. It was mistaken kindness on the part of a mother even, who was once requested by the physician to make a mark on paper every time she asked her sick daughter how she was. To her astonishment at night she counted 109 marks. Moreover, there is an indelicacy in pressing questions upon a sick person regarding the nature of his sickness, which savors of curiosity instead of loving sympathy, and which often does more harm than good. Rather, if you have access to the sick room, let it be to help the sufferer to look up and away from himself.

Now and then you find those who enumerate "among the compensations of sickness," as one invalid expressed it, "the pettings and coddlings and caresses of those nearest and dearest." Pity such! for very want of self-respect. A selfish exhibition of mental and physical weakness! There is a way to influence the sick to be very weak and silly. How much better to gird them to bear their sickness bravely, and to learn the lessons of the discipline!

V. If the patient shows a desire to listen to you, *have something ready to say to him.* Give him worthy thoughts to think over after you are gone. Suggest some of the benefits of sickness when rightly received. Speak of the encouraging features—home, comfortable room and bed, kind attention of friends, skillful physicians and remedies. Not always do you find all of these, but generally some of them. However great the discomforts, you can always see reasons for gratitude for mercies left. Refer to them. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

VI. Do not be afraid to speak a word for Christ in the sick-room. It is a mistaken notion which some physicians entertain, that all reference to God's dealings with His children must be scrupulously avoided for fear the patient will take alarm, and conclude his case is hopeless. Happily this is not true of Christian physicians; they know too well the great advantage of such influences. If there is ever a time when people should be helped to be honest with themselves, it is when they are sick. It is true they need cheer and encouragement, but a funny story, or an exciting incident is not the only thing that will revive them, or leave the most wholesome flavor in the mind. Tenderness and tact and prudence and wisdom are all necessary, but there is a way to get at the heart-wants and minister to them in the name of Christ. To do this, we must go in the spirit and love of Christ. Many a thoughtless person would never listen to God's voice in health, but in sickness He gets their ear for the first time. Their hearts become tender and suscepti-

ble, and they are easily influenced for good.

Sit down, then, by them quietly, and with subdued voice read aloud, portions of the Word,—precious promises which will remind them of the Father's loving care and tender sympathy for His suffering children. Speak to them in a plain, simple way, of the Lord's nearer presence in their need, and that He stands pledged to love and keep them to the end.

How soon, in this way, the place becomes a Bethel,—and joy, and gladness, and hope return.

VII. Sickness in some cases *may* mean *death*. Have some appropriate passages ready for such a time, and let the Lord speak through you, His own promises. "If you are near me when I die, hold up Jesus my Saviour before me; do not let me lose sight of Him," was the request a wife made to her husband.

When the mind lets go its hold on earthly things, it may be helped in its grasp on eternal things. Familiar faces may grow dim,

but the face of Jesus may shine out, the one altogether lovely.

It may be your friend is too weak to pray, and yet is longing for communion with the Beloved; kneel by the bedside yourself, and speak for him into that ear that is bended low to catch the faintest whisper. While you thus lift his heart in prayer, the Lord will reveal Himself and all will be light.

What an exalted privilege is ours, if we will have it, of being used to cheer and comfort and uplift those upon whom God's hand rests heavily! To bring to them the blessed leaves of healing from the Great Physician.

# Is There a Better Way?

ONE of the saddest mistakes of our times is that made by Christian people who stay away from church several Sabbaths, immediately after a death has occurred in the family. So common a thing is this, that it has become almost a universal custom. Happily there are some noble exceptions.

Saying nothing of the harmful influence upon others, it is an irreparable loss to those who need, then if ever, the consolations of God's house, and one they can ill afford to sustain.

The church members at such a time are moved with kindly sympathy, and are ready to surround the sorrowing friends with their loving presence, and endeavor to make up in some degree for the loneliness they feel. The pastor is untiring in his

attentions during the previous days or weeks of sickness and hour of dying; ministering at the funeral in the home, and visiting afterwards the bereaved family, giving freely his time and sympathies and help, so far as lies in his power. As the Sabbath approaches he still bears these stricken members of his flock tenderly on his mind and heart, and plans his services somewhat with reference to them. He has with thoughtful care brought to the service some special words of comfort and promise to those whose grief is fresh and keen. He looks down at the family pew—but alas, it is vacant! They are not there to receive these comforts from the Lord at his hand, or to join in the worship, or to listen to the prayer offered in their behalf. Because God has called one of their number to the higher worship in heaven, they stay away from these earthly courts, and miss the helps that are waiting for them here. Thus they allow the solemn occasion to pass without availing themselves of the timely spiritual helps in their affliction, or

of bearing testimony to the value of Christian worship as a means of strength and comfort in trial.

Of course these suggestions are not intended to apply to those who are detained by illness or other necessary causes; but only to those who from choice defer to the prevailing custom.

It is certain that sooner or later afflictions will come to every one of us; and it is well to entertain wholesome and Christian sentiments with regard to these things beforehand, so we shall be prepared to act wisely when the stroke falls, and not put off all thought of the evil day, so that it come upon us unawares, and unnerve us for the highest and best Christian conduct.

David testifies to the benefit of the Lord's house in time of trial: "*All the day long have I been . . . chastened; it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I.*" Many another of God's dear children could tell of the spiritual strength and uplift that have come to them as they have gone with

bowed and bleeding hearts into the sanctuary of God and taken their place among His true worshippers. In the solemn stillness of His house, the angel of Peace has descended like a dove and rested upon them; the all-compassing Love of God has overshadowed and enfolded them; the "sweet hour of prayer" has been to them one of devout and holy ministry from out the Father's blessed fullness; and they have returned to their broken fireside with a sweet sense of the Divine Presence that will forever abide there, and that will not leave them comfortless.

"*The Lord send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.*"

# "Nothing"

*(A BIBLE READING)*

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AN important incident in the life of our Lord, is that of the sending forth His twelve disciples on their mission of preaching and healing. It is recorded, essentially the same by three of the evangelists.

Up to a certain time, Christ Himself had been the Teacher and Preacher. "*Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the people.*"

But the multitudes that thronged about Him were increasing so rapidly, that He could not reach them all personally; humanly speaking, He needed help, and to whom would He naturally turn, but to

those of His disciples who had been with Him and witnessed His miracles?

Before entering upon this sacred ministry with which they were to be entrusted, they needed to be a while *with Jesus alone.* Not apart from Him could they be made ready. And so He called them together unto Himself.

Just what was said in that interview, or how long it lasted, we have no record; we only know He had something to bestow upon them, and that was, *power for service.* It was a divine act on His part to *give;* it was a simple act of faith on their part to *receive.*

Supposing when they heard Jesus calling them, they had replied, "Wait a little, . . . we are busy mending our nets; we must finish them first." Is it likely we should ever have heard of any mighty works they had done? O, no!—it was *because* they responded to His call, and spent time apart with Him, that He was able to use them as He did.

What a vital lesson, dear friends, do we

find right here, for ourselves! *Being with Jesus, spending time with Him, listening to His voice.*

We may imagine something of what they might have said to one another on the way, —"I wonder what He wants of us! do you know, Peter, or John?" "What can He have to say to us?" It is not probable, however, that one of them appeared at Jesus' side with a listless or indifferent spirit. Fancy rather, that little group, sitting at His feet, looking up into His face, with the loyal feeling in their hearts, "Whatever He bids us do, we are ready to obey."

As Jesus sent them forth, He gave them some special directions which perhaps surprised them. "*Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats apiece.*" What! go on a missionary tour without money to buy food? without shoes, even? What if the road is rough? Surely, if the weather turns cold, we shall need an extra coat. Must we go away from home empty-handed?" *Yes*,—He would teach

them, at the very outset, a lesson of faith, of absolute dependence upon Him. He would have nothing stand in the way which could possibly obstruct or hinder the incoming of His power into their lives. And so these disciples entered upon their divine commission.

It is interesting to observe, that later on, we find Christ putting this question to them, —"*When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.*"

O, how truly they had learned the secret of His bestowment! The same principle applies to us to-day. We as Christian workers, must not be cumbered with our earthly possessions, nor allow them to hinder us on our life journey, but take from Him the spiritual preparation He gives us.

It is perhaps a common thing for us to reckon somewhat upon our own fitness, and to count, more or less, upon any natural qualifications we may possess, or think we do;—again, if we fail to discover these in ourselves, but find them in others, we

may be tempted to envy them on account of their superior gifts.

But all this is wrong and dishonoring to Him who has called us to be fellow-workers with Him, and who has promised to supply all our need.

We may lack all other attainments, but this one, *a spiritual baptism*, we *must* have. We may be favored with natural gifts and graces,—(and these may be consecrated), yet even these cannot take the place of that divine power which comes through the Lord's personal touch. This power He is ready to bestow upon each of us who listens reverently to His voice,—who meditates upon His Word, and waits before Him in believing prayer.

Then if He shall ask us, as He did His disciples, "When I sent *you*, lacked *ye* anything?" we too may answer, "*Nothing, dear Lord.*" "Thy blessed word is my message;—Thy Holy Spirit is my Guide. Thy strength takes the place of my weakness; Thy sweet love is the inspiration of my heart; Thy ceaseless intercession for me

is the anchor of my hope, holding me up and leading me on in Thy service."

Such will be our unswerving testimony to the faithfulness of Him who has promised to be our Guide even unto death.

# The Privilege of Teaching God's Word

*"The Spirit breathes upon the Word,*
*And brings the truth to light."*

IT is a joy to teach God's Word, to prepare for it, to anticipate it, carrying it in one's heart. Many are the teachers all over our land who know this blessedness. Our Bible schools are full of them.

I. There is a blessing in the *preparation.* Among the happiest hours are those with the open Bible at the feet of the great Teacher. A Sunday-school class is a good spur to Bible study. In this busy age many a Christian is at a loss for time to read, much less to search the Scriptures. This duty is crowded out by the pressing cares and toils of active life. While the body receives its nourishment the soul goes starving. But when you pledge yourself to a

Bible class, other things must give way; the lesson must be prepared, and this implies faithful study of the Bible. It leads to real searching of the Scriptures. The teacher seeks diligently for the meaning and mastery of the passage. It is thus fixed permanently in his mind, and he makes solid progress through the demands of the class on him. He endeavors to have his heart in accord with the truth he studies and with the object of the work before him. It takes him out of a dreamy sentimental Christianity, and settles him into the heart of Christian truth. It compels him to dig out the meat of the Word and to be on his knees before God in earnest prayer; and to exert all his powers in behalf of his pupils. It keeps him on the watch for profitable thoughts and illustrations. He becomes a daily learner searching for all good things to bring to his class. Nothing could possibly occur better than this for the spiritual growth and enlargement of the teacher. It requires him to be in the spirit on the Lord's day. It restrains from wan-

dering thoughts, dispels his indifference, and leads him to abide by the cross. He cannot squander time and opportunity. He cannot let down in his faith, nor allow his life to drift, being set to a lower grade of Christian living.

II. There is blessing also in the *teaching*. When thus brought into living contact with the Word, and your ear is opened to hear the divine voice, you are filled with a longing to tell others of these things, and teaching is but giving utterance to the revelation of God's Word to your own soul; it is only drawing aside the veil, that His riches may be seen. Teaching is not simply asking questions. The substance of the lesson must be opened up and brought into sight. There must be something imparted to interest and awaken the mind. Acquaintance with the lesson gives confidence and courage. The teacher cannot give what he has not got. But the soul glowing under the power of the truth, is able to send it forth and awaken the same interest. Teacher and class discoursing together as they turn

their Bibles, comparing one passage with another, one reading a verse aloud, another asking a question, another still suggesting a practical thought, the teacher meanwhile gathering up the main points of the lesson, and guiding the thoughts of the class into spiritual channels; the moments are precious, and the hour has gone too quickly. Few joys are greater than that of the teacher who, first taught of God, gives to others what he has received. Then again the teacher is brought into close personal sympathy with the class; he feels a responsibility for their individual welfare. He sits down by them. He learns their needs and difficulties, and enters into their yearnings for the better life, and by loving counsel leads them on higher. The teacher is thus a spiritual leader and guide. Pleasant are the friendships formed between teacher and pupils, friendships that will continue through eternity.

III. A blessing comes, too, in *results*. A special joy comes to the teacher who is permitted to see the members of his class

coming to Christ. What an incentive this is to faithful teaching! We may not forget that we are dealing with immortal souls, susceptible to the power of the Holy Spirit. The truth we teach is God's truth, not ours. What faith we may have in it! Weakness ourselves, the Word is power.

IV. There is a blessing in the *memories.* Who does not recall his first Sunday-school class? Vividly those bright faces come up before you now, though years have passed since they gathered round you. After months of patient toil you saw in one and another the seed taking root, and you had the joy of garnering the fruit into the fold. You recall hours when a thoughtful silence rested upon the class. A gentleness in manner, a subdued expression on their faces, and here and there a moistened eye told you the Holy Spirit was near sealing the truth. Your soul yearned for them. You trembled as you realized the issues of that hour. You breathed a silent prayer for wisdom and help to lead them to Christ. The joyous privilege was yours, and the

memory of it will abide forever. Here is treasure laid up.

*A PRAYER.*

*My dear Father. My heart is full of precious memories of Thy great goodness to me in all the months past, and I desire to pay Thee a grateful tribute of praise and thanksgiving. It is Thy hand that has shielded me from evil, and filled my cup with blessing.*

*Thine infinite love has enfolded me, and Thy Holy Spirit has sustained and comforted me in times of deep sorrow and trial.*

*"If ever I loved Thee, dear Jesus, 'tis now." Oh, be pleased, from this time on, to inspire me to holier living, to more faithful and self-denying service. And accept my praises evermore, in Christ's name.*

*Amen.*

# Christian Companionship

ONE of the most interesting incidents in the life of St. Paul is recorded in connection with Titus, and shows the strong personal affection which existed between these two disciples of Jesus.

Paul, during one of his missionary tours, had come to the city of Troas for the express purpose of preaching the Gospel, where, as he testifies, "a door was opened unto me of the Lord." Here was a promising field of usefulness and the conditions for successful work. But we are surprised to find Paul restless in spirit and with little heart for his undertaking. What! has this strong disciple and leader lost faith in Christ or His cause? Has he come to a halting-place in his incessant labors? Why this unlooked-for depression? Hear his own touching answer: "I had no rest in my

spirit *because I found not Titus my brother.*"

Paul had, a little while before, sent Titus to Corinth with a letter of reproof and counsel to the church there, and he evidently expected on his arrival at Troas, to find him and learn how his letter was received. But Titus was not there; and so keen was his disappointment that it actually unfitted Paul for his appointed mission in that city; so, "taking his leave," "he went to Macedonia." But still his anxiety remained, for he writes: "When we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings and within were fears." Not until Titus arrived was the dark cloud lifted, and the light once more burst in upon his soul. Then he was able to say: "*I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in tribulation.* For God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us *by the coming of Titus.*" Notwithstanding our exalted ideas of the great apostle we suppress our thoughts of condemnation,

for he seems to come nearer to us in his moments of weakness, and we are reminded that he is *human* still, like ourselves.

But what was the secret of Paul's attachment to Titus? From the way he addressed his letter to him, "Mine own son after the common faith," it is thought he was one of Paul's converts. He speaks of him later on, as his "partner and fellow-helper." Other glimpses we have of their mutual interest in Christian work. He thanks God for putting the "same earnest care" for the Corinthians "into the heart of Titus"; and adds, "Exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, for his spirit was refreshed by you all." Again we find him "boasting" of them to Titus, and recognizing "his inward and more abundant affection" towards them. And still again, referring to Titus, he said, "Walked we not in the same spirit, and in the same steps?" What close and intimate friendship such words as these express! It is evident that Titus had come to be necessary

to Paul, and when they were separated, his spirit longed for him with great desire. From this simple story we gather several important lessons.

I. *Great men, though eminent in Christian graces are not independent of human love and fellowship.* Paul was weak, alone, but strong in the loving confidence of Titus.

II. *It is possible for the weak to bear the infirmities of the strong, as truly as the strong the weak.* Titus, the younger and weaker brother, was little aware, probably, what a helper he was to Paul; but Paul, in his trying and difficult work, had come to depend upon him largely for inspiration and encouragement. It was really God that comforted Paul, but He did it *through* Titus.

III. *Nothing so cheers the earnest Christian worker as the knowledge that souls have been blessed through his labors.* When Titus arrived in Macedonia, he reported a hopeful condition of things in the church of Corinth. Possibly Paul was feel-

ing anxious lest his faithful words of rebuke had offended them: but Titus told him of their "earnest desire" their "mourning for sin," and their "fervent mind toward" Paul, so that his fears were allayed and his heart set at rest concerning them; and he thanked God and took courage.

IV. We learn *the great value of Christian companionship.* No other is so sweet and precious and lasting, and no child of God is so strong that he can live without it. Even our Lord Himself, when on earth, gathered about Him a circle of heart friends who became His daily companions, and to whom He looked, in a certain way, for help and support. He was cheered by their loving presence, and lonely when they were absent from Him. When on one occasion some of His disciples forsook Him, it was no doubt in a tone of sadness and possible apprehension that He said to the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?"

V. *Active service in Christ's cause intensifies Christian affection among those as-*

*sociated together.* God meant this to be so; and it is not without significance that our Saviour sent forth His disciples on their first mission, "two and two." He knew they would be strengthened in their love to the Master and toward one another by mutual toils and sacrifices for Christ's sake. It is not less true to-day. If our devotion to Christ is warm and living, we find ourselves more strongly drawn to those who labor with us in the Gospel, and it is in this spirit that we sing

"Blest be the tie that binds."

VI. Best of all, *human friendships cemented in Christ do not end with this life.* One of the joys of heaven will be, that we are "heirs *together* of the grace of life"—and shall "live *together*" with Him forevermore. How sweetly it enhances the thought of seeing God day and night before His throne, if only our service there may be by the side of those whose dear presence on earth made life to us a blessed foretaste of the joys above!

# "The Fruit of the Lips"

*"Lord, I would henceforth seek*
*To think and speak*
*Thy thoughts, Thy words alone,*
*No more my own."*

THIS is a Bible phrase, and has reference to our words. The divine standard of perfection is a man's words: "*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*"

It is evident that this great gift—this endowment of speech—becomes to us either an element of danger or a power for good according to the way we use it. Commonplace and practical matters must be discussed by us all, and affairs of every-day life adjusted by interchange of words, one with another. The electric currents of our nature must find expression in joy and song and gaiety even, like the light and play of



L. of C.

sunshine on the lawn; and if, the meanwhile, the Christ-love is coursing through our veins, sweetly controlling the springs of our life, our words, however imperfect, will savor of the spirit of Him who spake as never man spake. But there is a step higher than this.

An angel is some time sent to each child of God, the same as to Daniel, saying, "*I have come for thy words.*" What shall they be that are worthy to be borne back to heaven? Scarcely a day passes that we do not have an opportunity "to speak a word in season to him that is weary"; a word of sympathy and love which shall be a winged messenger of peace and comfort, a word of light and cheer to some darkened soul; a word of testimony which shall give strength and courage to the doubting one. But there is a step higher still.

When Jeremiah was chosen of the Lord to be His prophet, his first exclamation was, "*O Lord God, I cannot speak for I am a child!*" Up to this hour we do not hear any complaint from Jeremiah that he could

not talk! But called of God for special service, he is surprised into a sense of his own deficiency. The dear Lord seeing his timidity and self-distrust, "put forth His hand and touched his mouth, and said to him, *'Behold, I have put My words into thy mouth; arise, therefore, and speak.'*"

This little incident furnishes abundant inspiration for Christian endeavor to-day. We need this same baptism of the Lord's touch. The mightiest power God ever gives to those who would serve Him is that of using His words. The most eminent and successful of His servants are those who are most familiar with the Bible, and have learned to apply Scripture truth appropriately. This, to be sure, is a matter of prayerful study and experience, but it is within reach of all who will have it.

I. The Bible estimates the character of men by the kind of lips they have. It speaks of *"lying lips":* they are *"an abomination to the Lord"*—and *"unbecoming."* How soon the person who utters lies is dropped from our list of trusted friends,

and loses the confidence and respect of all. Lying lips are as truly an abomination to men as to God. The Psalmist prayed, "*Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips.*"

II. Then there are the "*flattering lips,*" always coupled with a double heart, and the words they speak are "*vanity.*" Solomon warns us against meddling with such people.

III. There are "*perverse lips.*" Now and then you meet with one who seems to delight in saying perverse things. He finds fault with everybody, criticises the best efforts of others, and puts an opposite meaning on all good utterances of other people. He insists on saying the things that hurt and wound and leave a sting behind. He is the thorn among the flowers. We look in vain for fruit here.

IV. The prophet Ezekiel mentions the "*lips of talkers.*" I am sure they were not confined to the age in which he lived. A talker is in great danger of saying both foolish and sinful things, and things he will

be ashamed of, and sorry for (if he has any conscience left), when he calmly reflects on what he has said. The words of a talker are like a run-away horse that has broken loose from all control—he carries mischief and ruin in his track.

V. There are the "*lips of a fool.*" A fool talks very freely about things of which he knows nothing. He is full of words without thoughts. Thoughts unexpressed are often valuable, but spoken words that are void of understanding are mere emptiness. Solomon says, "*The lips of a fool will swallow him up.*" Judging from the stream of words from some people's lips, you might easily infer that their mouths were the largest part of them. Such lips can hardly be said to bear any fruit at all.

VI. Again, there are "*feigned lips.*" Have you never seen such? They say one thing and mean another. They suit their words to the occasion, and are never to be trusted. They are deceitful and insincere. They are like the man in the Greek Church who was seen devoutly counting his beads

with one hand, and deliberately picking the pocket of a fellow-worshiper with the other. No fruit here.

VII. There are "*unclean lips*" that speak words they ought not, and taint the air with their foul breath. How instinctively the pure and good shrink back from contact with such, and entreat them not to enter their home! They guard the approach to them, lest their words should catch the unsuspecting ear of their children.

VIII. Isaiah speaks of "*stammering lips.*" They do not dare trust themselves to speak openly for fear of making mistakes; they are timid, and their sentences are broken, and but poorly express what is in their hearts to say. This suggests infirmity rather than sin, and our judgment is kindly. But the very hindrance to free speech may be the safeguard that keeps the utterances pure and good. And the time is coming, according to the prophecy, when such lips "*shall speak plainly.*"

IX. Then there are "the lips of *those who are asleep.*" Silence at times is golden;

our Saviour taught us this by His own example. But to keep silent when He would have us speak, is like sleeping when we ought to be awake and about our work. When we put a covering over the tree so that it shall get no sunshine, no dew, we dishonor Him who sends the sunshine and the dew. Of course the tree yields no fruit. But "*A word spoken in due season, how good is it!*"

X. "The *lips of the wise.*"—Solomon says three beautiful things of them. They are "*gracious*"; they "*disperse knowledge*"; they "*refrain themselves.*" We may well envy the possessor of such lips. What a power for good! The number of troubles in the world that might be avoided, if only we could learn to refrain our lips, is legion. The hasty, the unkind, the inconsiderate word—there is no calling it back. Probably more mischief results from the lack of this refraining than from almost any other cause. David prayed, "*O Lord, keep the door of my lips,*" and Dr. Watts speaks of setting "a double

watch that day"—the day he was in the company of wicked men.

XI. The lips of *the righteous*, "know what is acceptable"; they speak right things, and scorn to utter evil. They "*feed many*." What a sacred mission consecrated lips have, and how usefully employed they may be in imparting instruction and counsel and consolation to others! And their fruit is a "*tree of life*."

XII. Once again, there are "*joyful lips*." I think we shall find fruit here. When David was in the wilderness, pursued by Saul, shut away from the tabernacle worship in which he delighted, he called to mind in the night watches the former times when God had been his helper; he remembered the loving-kindness of the Lord in the days of his prosperity; his soul was comforted, and he cried out: "*O God, Thou art my God! My mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips!*" Many a stricken soul in heaviness and sorrow has, like David, so dwelt upon God's loving-kindness to him as to forget his

misery, and break forth into a strain of joyful praise. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "*Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips.*"

But we must not forget that God Himself says, "*I create the fruit of the lips.*" Have we no responsibility about it, then? Most certainly we have. Fruit-growers take infinite pains in the cultivation of their fruit trees. They see that the conditions of healthy growth are right; that they have the requisite amount of sun and moisture and richness of soil, and that they are properly shielded from adverse and destructive storms and winds. All this that the fruit may be abundant and perfect, so they may produce it in the market as an attractive and desirable thing. When this is done, *God* gives the increase.

We must not be less painstaking in the cultivation of the fruit of our lips. We must see that the heart, from the abundance of which the lips speak, is right; that the weeds of selfishness and bitterness

and envy and evil are well rooted out; that it is enriched with the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must let in the sunshine of His promises freely, and surround it with the warm atmosphere of faith and prayer. We must guard it carefully from the winds of temptation, lest they sweep in and chill the fruit while yet in the bud. We must let the sweet dews of God's grace fall upon it, and the water from the wells of salvation moisten its roots, lest they dry up in the drought of summer.

This done, and God will give life and power to our words, and we may hope to bring forth fruit acceptable, and to His praise, and at last to be numbered among the redeemed in heaven, in whose lips is found no guile, "*for they are without fault before the throne of God.*"

"*Speak with My words.*" "*They shall withal be fitted in thy lips.*"

[A classmate of Dr. Goodell's was so impressed with the Article of Mrs. Goodell's on "The Fruit of the Lips," that he used it for a prayer-meeting. He cut it into twelve parts, and assigned each part to some member of his

church, to make the basis of his remarks, bringing in Scripture references on the subject.

It proved a most interesting and profitable meeting. The article is well worth careful study and meditation.

How many times we repent of our spoken words, and with David say, "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle."—F. J. D.]

# "I Have Learned"

*A BIBLE READING*

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THESE words give us a glimpse into the life experience of the Apostle Paul and reveal some of the mysteries concerning his attainments as a follower of Christ to which we may well give heed. When we behold an eminent Christian we are apt to forget the steps by which he has reached his position.

We overlook the fact that

> "Heaven is not reached at a single bound;
> But we build the ladder by which we rise
> From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
> And we mount to its summit round by round."

Like the rest of us, Paul's Christian life had a beginning, and he had everything to learn. His knowledge and enlargement of capacity did not come to him without ear-

nest and patient endeavor, and a studious use and forth-putting of the necessary means.

It will be helpful to us to take St. Paul for our model if we would aspire to lofty eminence in spiritual living.

When on his journey to Damascus, the miraculous light shone round about him and the voice of the unseen One penetrated his soul, he was "*not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*" He turned about and enrolled at once as a pupil in the school of Christ. He had, before this, sat at the feet of Gamaliel and learned many things, but now he sits at the feet of the Divine Teacher to be taught the higher wisdom that cometh from above; and from that day we find him earnestly "*reaching forth unto those things which are before,*" and pressing towards the mark. His motto was, "*So run that ye may obtain.*" He was going for his crown and for the prize! He made a point of forgetting the things that were behind, his old habits and aims and purposes, setting for himself a new standard. He recognized that he was "*a new creature*" in Christ, and that he

had started out in a godly career. We can see what carefulness this wrought in him, what clearing of himself, "*yea, what vehement desire.*" As a scholar in this school, he confessed his ignorance and experience. "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if by any means I might attain.*" He took a very lowly place; his attitude was "*looking unto Jesus*"—the attitude of a disciple, a learner. At the very outset, Paul seemed to have laid hold of a great principle. It is when we are "*beholding* the glory of the Lord" that *we* "*are changed*" into the same image.

Paul was an ambitious scholar and made rapid progress. His aim first of all, was to "know Christ." This was the foundation rock on which he built the magnificent structure of his Christian manhood. For this he cheerfully sacrificed everything that stood in his way. He relinquished every hope of worldly honor and preferment, and gathered up all his energies to the attainment of an intimate, personal acquaintance

with his divine Teacher "*for whom*," he says, "*I have suffered the loss of all things*." It is not long before we hear him speaking of the "*constraining love of Christ*." Learning to know Him, he had learned to love Him.

> "Sweeter lesson cannot be,
> Loving Him who first loved me."

Who can tell the rich rewards that come to him whose whole soul is engrossed with the infinite love of Jesus.

In this intense, bustling age, we are in great danger of cheating ourselves out of the dear and loving companionship with Christ which it is our privilege to have. An eminent Christian once prayed: "Lord, may we take time to enjoy Thee, and may we give Thee time to enjoy us." Surely,

> "Christ never asks of us such busy labor
> As leaves no time for resting at His feet;
> The waiting attitude of expectation
> He ofttimes counts a service most complete."

A scholar in any school cannot *always* be at his recitation. He must necessarily be

much alone in thought, and study, and preparation. So a pupil in Christ's school must secure time for meditation, and attentive listening to the voice of His Word. Paul did this. In close and sweet communion with Jesus he found inspiration for his almost constant labors, and he had a zeal in his work that was according to knowledge. "*I know whom I have believed.*"

Paul's aim was to attain "*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" He did not stop short of this, and before his graduation day, could say without boasting, "*I have learned.*" He teaches us a great lesson here. The day we cease to be learners we cease to grow, and become spiritual dwarfs. Our Christian lives should be a continual progress to the end.

Our Lord sometimes sets us very hard lessons, but always for our profit. He does not mean we should always stay down in the lower rooms. As we are able, He wants to promote us to the higher grades, to the heavenly places. Paul understood this. He learned much by experience, more by self-

sacrifice for Christ's sake, and still more by intimate acquaintance with Him. But he did not shrink from the deeper and more painful lessons. He aspired to heights in Christian knowledge that could be reached only by way of the valley. There are some things that can only be learned beneath the shadow of the Cross, but they are the choicest things. And such a blessed insight did Paul get into the glory of the sufferings of his dear Lord, by his personal fellowship in them, that he left on record this beautiful testimony: "*The sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.*"

Was it an easy thing for Paul to learn? We have only to read of his struggles with his old nature, and his fightings with sin, to answer this question. He was not ignorant of Satan's devices. And it may be an encouragement to us, who find it so hard to learn life's best lessons, to know that such a one as Paul, found it a difficult thing too.

But he has shown us the way to victory

over our easily besetting sins, and the path to noble Christian attainment: "*By the grace of God, I am what I am.*" And God is able to make this same grace bound in every one of us, "*that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*"

# "Where are the Nine?"

*A BIBLE READING*

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THE story of the miraculous healing of the ten lepers contains a most pathetic exclamation from our Lord, which suggests a wholesome lesson to us all who are in any way the recipients of His favors.

"Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

These lepers—doomed men—had chanced to meet the only One in all the world to whom they could appeal for help with any reasonable hope of relief. And to Him they earnestly cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us!" He graciously listened to their cry, and in His pity, He healed them. If He had not done this they must have suffered on to the bitter end. It was a question with them, between lifelong

bondage to disease, and abounding health. By His good favor the loathsome and incurable leprosy had departed, and the flush of vigor and strength had taken its place. This rich boon had been granted freely, and without price, and with no lingering delay. In a moment, as it were, they were transformed from lepers to sound men.

But, strange to say, only one of the ten returned to give thanks! Jesus noticed this strange conduct, and was sorrowful.

"Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" Can it be possible they have asked and appropriated so much and forgotten *Me?* If they have thoughtlessly gone their way for the moment, surely they will yet turn back. Thus we can picture Christ as He stands gazing after them with yearning heart and disappointed look.

When we take up this case and think it over, we are filled with amazement and indignation at so gross an exhibition of ingratitude and selfishness; and yet, is it

not typical of hundreds to-day who are receiving richly at the hand of God, and who render not back to Him according to his benefits?

We know that while it is God's pleasure to give, it is also His prerogative to receive. He is not indifferent to our attitude in these matters. He looks for and expects some return from us for the blessings He bestows. If we are grateful, He is pleased and honored; if we are silent and selfish, He is grieved as He waits in vain for the praise which is His due. These blessings are so rich and abundant that they seem to fall upon us almost as a matter of course. But no! they are thought out and planned, one by one, with loving regard to our need. "He openeth His hand;" that is why they fall.

Perhaps the one leper whose heart was touched, longed for some alabaster box of precious ointment to pour upon the head of his benefactor. So now, the devoutly grateful soul will not rest until he has offered to the Lord of that which costs him

something. The gratitude that seeks to go no further than words, is not the deepest nor the most genuine. Christ warned His disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, "For they say and do not."

The natural impulse of a truly grateful heart is to express itself, not only in words, but also in gifts; the deeper the sense of obligation, the stronger grows the desire to give. There is something very beautiful in the way our Heavenly Father encourages this impulse in His children and opens up to them a channel as deep and broad as the measure of His gifts to them.

"When ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, . . . every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord which He hath given thee."

If we are ready to accept this standard for ourselves, let us take a single day, and carefully note the favors we receive at His hand, even those we call the most common.

We rise in the morning, having had His protecting care through the night. The

bright sun shines in at our windows; the sweet breath of heaven cheers and invigorates us; we are nourished from His table, we are greeted by dear ones about us. The atmosphere of love pervades the home; we are surrounded by pleasant associations; we scarcely know a want; our cup is full to overflowing. The hours pass, each one of them bringing some necessary, wholesome toil, or needed refreshment, till the evening twilight calmly broods over us, shedding divine peace and benediction, and the curtain of night again falls, and we rest, "not for dreams, but for fresher power to be and to do."

Added to these temporal blessings, so manifold and oft-repeated, is the capacity to hold and enjoy them,—eyes for the light, etc. But above all is the growing confidence of an unfailing Friend by our side, sustaining, guiding, enriching our daily life.

If in some such way as this we enumerate our mercies, we shall find them as the very stars of heaven for multitude.

It is a good thing, also, to take account

of special tokens from the Father's hand,—some mighty deliverance from peril, some unexpected relief from pressing anxiety, some long-delayed answer to prayer, the restoration to health of a beloved husband or child. Or if through the discipline of sorrow He has lifted you and me, by a new and living way, up on to the high table-lands of faith, and revealed to our spiritual vision the glories that await us in the land that is not far away, where sickness, and pain, and death can never come . . . O then, for these rich overflowings of His tender grace, let us lay a special thank offering of gold or silver at His feet, as a testimonial of our love and heartfelt gratitude. It shall come up before Him as sweet incense; with such sacrifices He will be well pleased.

So will He "rejoice over thee with joy"; "He will joy over thee with singing." And He will answer thee in the joy of thine heart.

*A PRAYER.*

*O Lord, help me to pass on to others this*

*love Thou hast given me. May I not selfishly enjoy the rich blessings and privileges Thou dost bestow upon me, but may I share them with others less favored. Give me the self-sacrificing spirit of Him who counted not His life dear unto Himself, but gave it a living sacrifice that He might save a perishing world.*

*Fill me, I pray Thee, with Thy Holy Spirit, and make the fruits of the Spirit abound in me;—Love, that reaches out to the lost;—Joy that rejoices in Thy salvation;—Peace that keeps me calm and trusting, whatever Thou dost send me of sorrow or discipline; and faith in Thy abounding and gracious promises. Amen.*

# "A New Song"

*"The sun that lights mine eyes,*
*Is Christ the Lord I love;*
*I sing for joy . . ."*

IN the "still hour" of one of the last days of the old year, as I sat with the precious Word open before me, looking for something that I might take as my "motto" for the new year, my eyes rested upon one of the marked passages in my Bible, and held my attention, to the exclusion, for the time being, of all else. The passage was this:

*"I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God!"*

As I yielded myself to the inspiration of the passing moments, the Spirit seemed to illumine the very letters with a hallowed light and a fresh sense of His nearer presence swept through my whole being. My

soul was awake to the impulse of love, and my thoughts drifted easily into this open channel.

It appears that the "sweet Psalmist of Israel," ages agone, in a moment of spiritual uplift, uttered this exclamation, which, all unconsciously to himself, was destined to inspire my heart in this later time. And now as a result, as each day dawns, I, too, am saying, "I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God!"

I. We know this song of David's was a *song of his heart.* It is the heart-music to which the ear of the Lord is always open. It may sometimes be too deep for utterance, but even then, it is well-pleasing to Him. St. Paul reminds us that we may "make melody in our hearts unto the Lord." Music of any sort, however, admits of cultivation; our natural voices have to be trained in order to sing correctly. So our hearts must be cultivated to render acceptable music to God. We may be taught in God's school to "be joyful in the Lord." A happy heart sings; a fault-finding heart can never sing.

A selfish heart, craving more for itself than for others, is never ready to sing. A sad heart, dwelling upon its losses with no upward look, continually crying out, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow"—such a heart has no voice for song. But the heart that makes the "joy of the Lord" its strength, can sing forth God's praises at all times.

II. This song of David's was a *song of praise.* He had been thinking over God's dealings with him; he had been saying, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!"

"I remember the days of old." "I meditate on all Thy works." "I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."

III. This song of David was a *song of gratitude.* "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever!"

IV. King David's song was a *song* of *obedience.* "Thou art my portion, O God, I have said that I would keep Thy words."

V. This song of David was a *song of love.* "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications."

VI. David's song was one of *hope and cheer.* He knew by experience, what trial and affliction were, yet he said, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

Thus we see there is a variety in the heart-music we may render to the Lord, according to the varying circumstances in which we may be placed. There is the song of praise, of gratitude, of love and loyalty, of hope and cheer.

When everything goes well with us, it is easy to sing; but when the waves of sorrow sweep over us, rending our hearts with grief, our singing is apt to cease. When our homes are broken, and loved ones who have been the light and cheer and inspiration of our daily lives, are taken from us, and walk no more by our side, we say, Is it possible for us to sing? When the lone-

liness presses upon us, and we miss the old-time companionship which was so precious, and so necessary to our happiness, we say, Is it strange that our heart-melody is hushed? Oh, if we only knew it, these are the times we may honor God the most with our heart songs! The songs of merriment and mirth may have no place, but we may learn to sing "a new song" unto the Lord; a song of loving submission and trust. It is also our privilege so to lose ourselves in the contemplation of our loved ones in the presence of God and the holy angels in heaven, as to share, in some measure, their bliss, and even to join them in singing their new song of hallelujah and praise.

A writer has well said, "The happiest, sweetest, tenderest homes are not those where there has been no sorrow; but those which have been overshadowed with grief, and where Christ's comfort was accepted. The very memory of the sorrow is a gentle benediction that ever broods over the household, like the silence that comes after prayer."

Who of us does not wish to belong to the ever-increasing choir of heavenly voices, some in heaven and some on earth, which are continually singing the praises of God's redeeming love and grace? Can we not, every day, look up and say,

"*I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God!*"

"Let me lose earth's dearest thing,
Let my fairest hopes take wing,
I shall yet most blessed be,
Saviour, clinging close to Thee."

# "One Sweetly Solemn Thought"

THIS beautiful and familiar hymn of Phœbe Cary's was born of her own heart experience. She wrote it in the retirement of her room one Sabbath morning on returning from church. It was not the result of any premonitions of approaching death, so far as we know. She lived eighteen years after composing it, and had the comfort of knowing something of the power for good it came to be in the world. In the place of public worship, concerning which God said, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee," she caught a fresh glimpse of the better land. "The great white throne" and "the crystal sea" appeared before her in unveiled beauty and splendor, scarcely beyond her reach.

Such a rapturous view of the eternal world was no vain thing to this devout soul; it was "a sweetly solemn thought." She realized, with mingled emotions of awe and joyful anticipation, that she was "nearer home" that day, perhaps, than she thought. And as if to assure herself before God she prayed,

> "Father, perfect my trust!
> Strengthen my power of faith!
> Nor let me stand at last alone
> Upon the shore of death."

To those who have no faith in God, with whom the promises have no weight, to whom the hastening years bring no hope of heaven, the impending fact of death must be an ever-increasing terror. But to the child of God, whose abiding trust is in Him, whose heart is linked to every precious word of promise, whose life is "hid with Christ," there is nothing to fear in death. The Christian idea is that of sleep; it is always spoken of as such in the New Testament. It is the gate which opens into life; only those who die *really live.* The

almighty, invisible Hand which we grasp in faith when we first become the Lord's and which guides us through every step of our pilgrimage, will hold us safe in that solemn hour, and we shall not be left to cross the dark river alone. "When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee, . . . thy Saviour.*" By faith we can appropriate this comforting assurance, and *rest in hope.* God has not left His children in any doubt on this point, and it is not His will that we should be subject to bondage all our lifetime through fear of death.

Nothing will tend to allay our fears and elevate us to a state of calm trust like *anticipating* the life beyond. In order to do this intelligently we must learn all we can about that life. One says, "Oh, there is so little about heaven in the Bible!" It is true the disclosures are meagre compared with what we would like to know, but if we search carefully we shall probably be surprised to find how much there is that throws light upon this subject.

Heaven is described in the book of Reve-

lation under the figure of a holy city of surpassing magnificence and loveliness, with many mansions and "having the glory of God." Every beautiful and precious object on earth is made a type and shadow—walls of precious stone, gates of pearl, golden streets, living fountains of waters and tree of life, the throne and the rainbow round about, with Christ the light and life, the centre of all.

The Bible also teaches that heaven is to be the final and eternal abode of His children. Our Saviour said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, . . . and I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

David undoubtedly had heaven in mind when he said, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Paul was willing to be "absent from the body and *at home* with the Lord." Christ said to the penitent thief, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." As Stephen was dying he looked steadfastly into heaven and saw Jesus stand-

ing on the right hand of God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Again, the Word of God reveals the state of those who enter heaven as one of safety, of rest, of happiness, of communion with Christ. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." All causes of unhappiness will be removed—sin, death, sorrow, pain, hunger, thirst, tears.

We also learn that they are actively employed both in praise and in service. St. John, in his apocalyptic vision, represented them as standing before the throne, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands, singing the new song and crying, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." "And they serve Him day and night in His temple." Paul gives suggestion of another employment—that of acquiring knowledge. "Now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known."

The Psalmist speaks of the delights of

heaven—"fullness of joy" and "pleasures forevermore." The poet Trench tells the story of a monk who feared the worship and praise of heaven might sometime grow monotonous and wearisome. One day as he wandered in the woods he was charmed by the sweet singing of a bird; the song seemed to "invite all hearts to holy mirth." As he stopped to listen, the time seemed not long, but on returning to the convent he found that while he had stood lost in the deep gladness of his soul, three generations had passed! Ever after, his one only fear was lest eternity should not suffice to sound the depths of the joys reserved in heaven.

Not the least of the cherished anticipations of heaven must always be the longed-for reunion of dear friends separated by death, who have tasted the bitter cup of heart-loneliness on the earth. Our Saviour said to His disciples: "A little while and ye behold Me not; and again a little while and ye shall see Me." "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." The One who implanted within our hearts

that imperishable affection which is the sweetness and inspiration of our earthly existence, does not mean that we shall always hunger for our lost joys. In His own good time, "after that ye have suffered a little while," He will restore our union baptized in a deeper, purer, holier love one for the other, and thus together we shall spend eternity with Him.

Seeing that all these things shall be, "what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God." "For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

# "So Great a Cloud of Witnesses"

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our attention to a wonderful fact in the spiritual world, to which, perhaps, because of its mysterious nature, we may have failed to attach due significance; a fact, however, if we allow it to bear upon our individual lives, which will serve as a glad incentive to high and holy living. While presenting the "*better hope*," the "*better substance*," the "*better country*," and the "*better resurrection*" as worthy of our attainment, he suggests as a special stimulus to our best endeavors this motive: "*Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*" Drawing the figure from the Oriental games, he transfers the simile to the Christian race, revealing the marvellous truth that as the competitors in their games were surrounded by specta-

tors who eagerly watched their progress, so a countless, unseen multitude of beings above us, like a cloud, overshadows us, ever alert and interested in our onward course as we press our way to the Heavenly City.

Here, indeed, is a subject for our serious thought. The prophet Elisha, in behalf of his servant, prayed, "*Lord, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.*" So to us the Lord is ready to give the fuller revelation of spiritual truth, as we reverently seek it in His Word.

Here and there, throughout the Bible, we find blessed assurances of His own Divine Presence with us, of His protecting care over us, and His everlasting arms underneath us. Again and again we are glad to appropriate to ourselves those precious words of our Lord, "*Lo, I am with you alway.*" The more we dwell upon them and take them in, the larger our faith and courage grow. We are persuaded that

whatever else befalls us, nothing shall be able to separate us from Him. Conscious as we are of our insufficiency to do, or even think, anything as of ourselves, we rest upon Him as upon the solid rock, knowing whom we have believed, and that He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

But it is a sweet thought that our Father is also mindful of that element in our nature which craves *human* sympathy, and that He still permits us to cling fondly to our human companionships and loves, even though death may for a time have separated us. When our dear friends are taken from us we do not cease loving them; we seem to love them all the more. A year passes—five—ten years, since the farewell, and we love them still, and the sense of loneliness does not grow less.

Very many, no doubt, as the years run on, are more and more conscious of loss. Especially is this true of those who have crossed the summit of life's hill, whose loved companions have disappeared from

sight and walk no more by their side; the familiar voice, which all along the way was their joy and inspiration, now stilled; the smile which cheered and encouraged them now vanished; the helping hand and strong protecting arm no longer raised in their behalf; the daily, countless touches of love now only among the treasured memories of the past. This is the picture we see everywhere as we look about us:

> "Never morning wore
> To evening, but some heart did break."

Although the eternal hills are increasingly in sight, and the visions of glory where our dear ones are and where God is, are brightening, and the blessed day-dawn seems not so very far away, yet even here and now, before we reach the heavenly goal, there are higher steeps for us to climb and rougher ways for our feet to tread, it may be, and we need to avail ourselves of all the helps offered us by the One who has measured our way for us, and who waits to welcome us at the Gates of Light.

It is not comfort simply that we want in our losses—precious though that is—but renewed courage and power to go on with unremitting diligence in all ways of useful service or patient waiting till we have fulfilled God's purpose in us here, and wrought His holy will; until we have finished our course and won our crown.

There is no hope concerning our friends who have died—excepting the supreme hope of meeting them again—which we so fondly cherish as the hope that they love us still and think of us in all our labors and struggles and aspirations; that they, having passed all the way before us and attained the heavenly heights themselves, do not forget us who linger here below.

These yearnings of our hearts surely need not go unanswered. This "cloud of witnesses," including the heroes who lived lives of faith on the earth—Enoch, Moses, David also, and Samuel—this "cloud" an ever-expanding one, we must believe still holds its place in the heavens, and will, un-

til all the succeeding generations of God's faithful are gathered home.

If this be true, then why may we not cherish the belief also that *our* dear ones, *our very own*, with whom we took sweet counsel upon earth, have, in turn, entered that cloud, and to-day are watching our progress, step by step, as we journey on? With reverent imagination we can think of them as beholding us, as singling us out individually, as "mourning more for us, if there were mourning in heaven, than we for them;" as rejoicing in all our victories and triumphs; as praying for us as they were wont to do when they were here with us; and mutually sharing our own fond anticipations of a happy and eternal reunion in the mansions above.

While we thus pierce the veil which hides the other world from us, we find ourselves bound to the heavenly host by cords which death itself cannot sunder.

"So we on earth have union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic, sweet communion
With those whose rest is won."

How much there is in all this to inspire us with diligence and faithfulness to go forward with firmer step and more cheerful heart! For the love we bear them, and because they wait for our coming, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

# Memorials

THE maxim of a wise man of the olden time was, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." "Fear," "duty"—cold and heartless! we say.

Christ came to reveal a higher ideal. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye *love* one another even as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

He even reasoned with them in favor of something beyond *duty*—"When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, ye say, (or may well say) we are unprofitable servants; we have *only* done that which it was our duty to do"—implying that their service was incomplete. On the other hand, He would teach them that *love* is sufficient in itself to impel them

to every sacrifice and service which His cause required.

The highest expression of God's love was a *gift*. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—"*loved*," "*gave*." This is the loftiest ideal that could possibly be set before us.

Not less wonderful was the love of Christ Himself, that led to the sacrifice of His own life. "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And Christ said again to His disciples, "I have left you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you," namely, exercise this same Christ-like *love*, one toward another, in deeds of generous self-sacrifice and surrender. Here is our warrant for Christian benevolence.

Different motives constrain us in the exercise of benevolence, the same as they prompt other acts of the Christian. Among them two are prominent: "First, duty, leading us to give what the conscience says

one ought to give, deciding upon a stated proportion, and abiding by it with no further thought or care. And second, *love*, which leads to the *unrestrained* giving, according to the yearning desire toward God, or in behalf of our fellow-men. The first of these, duty, is good and commendable as far as it goes, and should not be ignored. Any person who really lives up to his *duty*, in the bestowment of his earthly possessions, is certainly on a high plane of Christian living, and is holding up a worthy example to those around him. But love reaches out and beyond the duty line, into the realm of tenderness and affection, where self-interests are forgotten for the time, and those of others gain a winsome precedence.

We may say further that these offerings of love flow in different channels;—sometimes finding expression in generous bestowals upon personal friends now with us, and sometimes in memory of dear ones who have left us. These impulses of love, in either case, open doors of joy and privi-

lege, and often seem to render the impossible possible to us.

I wish just now, to emphasize more specially the second class of love offerings, those that are prompted by our love for dear friends whose faces we no longer see upon the earth; *memorials*, therefore, which touch the tenderest chords of our hearts.

Oh, how many a glorious companionship that had in it the blessed fullness of Christ's presence, and the joy of Christ's life, has been suddenly ended in this world by death! How many a home, beautiful and united in Christ, has been darkened and saddened by the going out from it of a cherished and beloved one! Who of us has not lost from our sight a sweet child, perhaps; a fond, devoted husband; a father, a mother, a sister, or brother, whose yearly recurring birthday or wedding day, or whose anniversary of the final home-going, awakens tender emotions within our hearts, and brings to us a fresh sense of our loneliness? The natural impulse, as these days come around, is to sit silently in the shadow

of our grief and selfishly dwell upon our losses; saying to those about us, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto *my* sorrow!"

But cannot our love manifest itself in a truer and worthier manner?

When our dear ones were with us, it was a joy to lavish upon them our choicest treasures. Now they are gone, do we not long to manifest our affection over and over again, in some old-time, tangible way?

Ah, my friends, if we only knew it, these sacred anniversaries bring to us the very golden opportunities we crave.

It is indeed a happy thought that we may minister in their name to others, and so perpetuate the love we still cherish for them, by deeds of benevolence in Christ's name; that for their sakes still, we may place a gift of love on God's altar, which He will accept and transmute into blessing beyond our highest thought.

It is delightful to know of the increasing number of God's children who have already discovered the blessed secret of assuaging

their own grief, by thoughtful sacrifice for others,—who are in the habit of welcoming the recurring day of sacred memory, because it renews the occasion for recording their never-waning love for the vanished one by a memorial gift—a gift which expresses also their unceasing gratitude to Him who granted them happy years of companionship in the past.

Who shall say, that friends here and friends in the unseen world, who in the truest sense are *one*, may not thus be brought *together* in a very tender and sweet way? And that, by such a commingling of earthly and heavenly love and consecration, God Himself may not be honored, and His cause on the earth advanced?

"What shall I do to keep your day,
My darling, dead for many a year?
I could not, if I would, forget
It is your day; and yet, and yet —
It is so hard to find a way
To keep it, now you are not here.

"I cannot add the lightest thing
To the full sum of happiness
Which now is yours; nor dare I try

To frame a wish for you, for I
Am blind to know, as weak to bring,
All impotent to aid or bless.

"And yet it is *your* day, and so —
The *gift* I would have given to *you*,
And which you cannot heed or take,
*Shall still be given!* and it shall be
A secret between you and me.
A sweet thought, every year anew,
That *it is given for your sake.*

"And so your day, yours safely still,
Shall come and go with ebbing time,
The day of all the year most sweet,
Until the years, so slow, so fleet,
Shall bring me, as in time they will,
To where all days are yours and mine."

# Retrospect

IN coming to the close of the year, I delight to testify to the long-suffering and patience of God toward me. His promises are my daily comfort. His Word is an increasing joy and treasure in my heart. No book in the world has the attraction for me that the Bible has. "O, how love I Thy law."

I am deeply grateful to God for His manifold mercies to me during the year. I can count my trials,—I cannot begin to number my blessings. Surely my cup runneth over, and it is my Heavenly Father who fills it. The riches of the whole world could not so satisfy my longings, as one taste of Jesus' love.

No work is so sweet as that I am permitted to do for Him ;—no time so precious as that I spend with Him and with those

that love Him;—no friends so dear as those in whom I see reflected His image, and who have His spirit;—no conversation with friends so cheering and helpful, as that about Christ, and His forgiving love.

So I bring my sins, and wants, and burdens, and my praises too, and lay them all down at His feet, and bear a song away.

My prayer as the old year goes out, is, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*"

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